

County Council Meeting – 19 March 2024

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 27 February 2024.

In accordance with the Constitution, Members can ask questions of the appropriate Cabinet Member, seek clarification or make a statement on any of these issues without giving notice.

The minutes containing the individual decisions for the meeting above have been included within the original agenda at Item 14. If any Member wishes to raise a question or make a statement on any of the matters in the minutes, notice must be given to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the last working day before the County Council meeting (Monday 18 March 2024).

For members of the public all non-confidential reports are available on the web site (www.surreycc.gov.uk) or on request from Democratic Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

There were no reports with recommendations for Council.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

At its meeting on 27 February 2024 Cabinet considered:

A. PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SURREY (LEP INTEGRATION)

From April 2024, the Government will cease providing funding to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the functions previously held by LEPs will transfer to Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs). This report highlighted the key progress that had been made with the other UTLAs and LEPs on the disaggregation of programmes, funding, liabilities, and assets, outlines any outstanding issues, and provided more specific details on the implications of the latest government guidance and funding.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet approves the council becoming an “Accountable Body” from 1 April 2024 for the purposes of collaborating with government on an integration plan and assurance for delivery of core LEP functions and government programmes across Surrey.
2. That Cabinet notes that from 1st April 2024 SCC will be recognised by Government as the lead for strategic economic planning and the delivery of economic growth functions in Surrey that were previously undertaken by LEPs. The new functions and responsibilities will be integrated within SCC’s existing economic growth function.

3. That Cabinet notes the progress made in transitioning LEP functions to the County Council from April 2024, through engagement with stakeholders, including relevant upper tier local authorities, Enterprise M3 LEP and Coast to Capital LEP.
4. That Cabinet delegates authority for concluding the work of transitioning LEP functions to the County Council from April 2024 to the Interim Executive Director for Customers and Communities and the council's Section 151 Officer, in conjunction with the Executive Director for Environment, Infrastructure and Growth, and in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment, Infrastructure and Growth.

Reasons for decisions:

To bring the significant strategic decision of the government and its consequent implications and opportunities to the attention of Cabinet and to ensure a smooth and effective approach to the transfer and integration of LEP functions for Surrey into the County Council.

B. PROVISION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN THE PLANNING AREA OF REIGATE

Cabinet was asked to make a decision regarding the future of primary school provision in Reigate.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet pursue option 2, establishing a working group to explore reorganisation for the Reigate Primary Planning Area.
2. That Cabinet agree the timescales and scope for the working group as outlined in **Annex 1**.
3. That Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Director of Land & Property in conjunction with the Executive Director of Children Families and Lifelong Learning to commission initial desk-based viability studies up to £0.6m.
4. That Cabinet pursue the determination of the live planning application (Reference RE22/01796CON) for option 1, to establish if this is a viable option.

Reasons for decisions:

As the majority of respondents to the consultation selected option 2, the recommendations are to continue to look for alternative solutions and pursue option 2 by establishing a working group to explore re-organisation options as set out in recommendation 1.

It has not been possible to identify any potentially viable sites other than Woodhatch Place, or to identify a solution for Reigate Priory Junior School (RPJS) to remain a 600-place junior school on the current site for the reasons set out in Annex 2 of this report. The working group will look at re-organisation options to provide sufficient school places in the area. Possibilities could include the Woodhatch site and the existing school sites, including the potential for a smaller school at Priority Park and other potential sites. The evaluation criteria are set out

at Annex 1, this includes the need for any solution under Option 2 to be comparable in cost to Option 1. Cabinet Agreement for the timescales and scope of the working Group is sought under recommendation 2. More information about the role, functions and scope of the working group and timescales is available in Annex 1: Working Group Terms of Reference.

Surrey County Council would not ordinarily recommend a closure of a school that provides quality education and continues to meet the needs of local pupils, however, school closure or school closure as part of an amalgamation may be considered by the working group, if an alternative cannot be found, or if a school no longer meets the needs of children.

Recommendation 3 ensures relevant delegated authority to ensure sufficient feasibility is completed for any solution identified by the working group. There may be feasibility studies across multiple schools as part of the agreed option. The original site search for a 5FE (5 Form Entry) Junior school may be refreshed alongside any additional site search as part of option 2.

There is no guarantee of finding viable options and this process will further delay a secure future for RPJS. To ensure a continuity of sufficient school places for children and young people in Reigate, it would be sensible and reasonable that, as set out in Recommendation 4, Surrey County Council pursues determination of the live planning application to relocate Reigate Priory Junior School to Woodhatch Place, (Ref RE22/01796CON), by submitting additional information to address the issues identified by the Planning and Regulatory Committee when referring it back to the applicants. This is in order to fully understand if this option is a viable solution.

Recommendation 4 relates only to proceeding to determination of the planning permission. This is to keep all possible options open for consideration at this time and as a back-up if an alternative cannot be identified or if a more urgent need arises to re-locate RPJS from the current site. This is because of the uncertainties in making all the changes which may be necessary under option 2 and doing so within a reasonable time frame.

A further decision will be required by Cabinet later in 2024 to determine how to proceed, taking into consideration the recommendations of the working group and the outcome of the planning application.

C. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN PUBLIC REPORT REGARDING CONCERNS ABOUT THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

The purpose of this report was to bring to Members' attention a public report which has been issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet considers the Ombudsman's report and the steps that have been taken by the Service to address the findings;
2. That Cabinet considers whether any other action should be taken; and

3. That Cabinet notes that the Monitoring Officer will be bringing this report to the attention of all Members of the Council.

Reasons for decisions:

There is a statutory requirement for the Monitoring Office to bring to Members' attention any public report issued by the Ombudsman about the Council which identifies it is at fault and has caused injustice as a result.

D. SFRS FIRE HOUSE AND TRAINING FACILITY

Cabinet approval was requested for capital expenditure to redevelop the SFRS fire house and training provision and deliver a new facility which would be capable of providing crucial training for new staff and will facilitate the ongoing training of the existing operational personnel.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet approves capital funding from the pipeline to redevelop the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) fire house and training facility and design and construct a new fire house and training facility on the existing site. The capital funding required to develop the new facilities is commercially sensitive at this time and is set out in the Part 2 report.
2. That Cabinet approves procurement of appropriate supply chain partners to deliver the design, build and fit out of the new structures in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.
3. That Cabinet notes that, regarding the procurement of supply chain partners, the Executive Director for Environment, Infrastructure and Growth and the Director of Land and Property are authorised to award such contracts, up to +5% of the budgetary tolerance level and any other legal documentation required to facilitate the approvals within this report.

Reasons for decisions:

Essential capital investment is required to enable the redevelopment of one of the SFRS critical assets – SFRS live fire training facility.

The existing fire house and drill towers at this facility are reaching the end of their useful life. Parts for the ventilation system are no longer readily available due to this type of system being obsolete, requiring replacement parts to be refurbished or remade from second hand items. This has resulted in significant periods when the facility is non-operational.

There are several significant Health and Safety (H&S) concerns including internal linings falling from the ceiling, insufficient smoke extraction and ventilation which demonstrate that the facility is no longer fit for purpose.

E. QUARTERLY REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY ARRANGEMENTS: 3 February 2024 - 11 March 2024

The Cabinet is required under the Constitution to report to Council on a quarterly basis the details of decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Members under the special urgency arrangements set out in Standing Order 57 of the Constitution. This occurs where a decision is required on a matter that is not contained within the Leader's Forward Plan (Notice of Decisions), nor available 5 clear days before the meeting. Where a decision on such matters could not reasonably be delayed, the agreement of the Chairman of the appropriate Select Committee, or in his/her absence the Chairman of the Council, must be sought to enable the decision to be made.

The Cabinet RECOMMENDS that the County Council notes that there have been NO urgent decisions since the last Cabinet report to Council.

**Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council
11 March 2024**

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